

Instructions for applying for the  
**Erie County Executive Energy Achievement Award**

Please provide the following information and submit on plain paper. Submit copies only of any (non-proprietary) supporting documents. Applications will not be returned.

Please send one (1) copy to:

Erie County Environmental Management Council  
c/o Erie County Department of Environment and Planning  
95 Franklin Street, Room 1077  
Buffalo, NY 14202

**And** one (1) copy electronically to: [burdk@erie.gov](mailto:burdk@erie.gov)

Name of the Project: Lexington Cooperative Market

Name of organization: Lexington Real Foods Community Co-op

Address: 807 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222

Name of the applicant or contact: Tim Bartlett

Phone number of contact person: 716.886.1036

Dates of project conception and completion: May, 2002 to July, 2005

Describe the condition that first caused the project to be considered: Several years of double digit sales growth left our 1200 square foot store overcrowded and run down.

Give a one to two paragraph narrative description of the overall project.

The Lexington Co-op acquired the site at 807 Elmwood Avenue (formerly Willis and Lowe) in early 2004. We were very excited to create a store that would realize our member-owner's vision of bringing a world class, 4,500 retail square foot natural foods grocery store to Elmwood Avenue. The Co-op built a beautiful new 8,500 square foot building in order to realize our vision of a destination store in a neighborhood setting.

The expansion of the Lexington Co-op was a unique and exciting project for the city of Buffalo. Located in one of the city's thriving neighborhoods, the Co-op's expansion has further solidified the Elmwood area as the place to live and work. In addition, the expanded Co-op will:

- Create at least 60 new Co-op jobs by year three, taking our total employment to over 80 people.
- Return nearly 40% of every dollar spent to the local economy by supporting local farmers, manufacturers, and other businesses - estimated to be roughly \$2 million per year in 2006.
- Allow city residents to be part owners of a thriving local business.

The expanded Lexington Co-op continues to specialize in retailing fresh produce and organic groceries. We emphasize fresh foods, with expanded offerings of dairy, bakery, as well as the region's largest, freshest and highest quality organic produce department. New departments for the co-op are a grab-and-go deli and fresh meats and seafood. Our vitamins and supplements department has grown as well, developing a name for high quality, reliable products.

Please answer all pertinent questions:

- What was the initial goal of the project?  
To better serve our member-owners with a neighborhood, community owned natural foods store. Part of our mission as an organization is to “nurture the local economy & the environment”. Therefore, our goal for our new facility was that it incorporate as many elements of green design as were economically feasible.
- Was renewable energy technology considered for the project and how?  
Yes. We looked into solar panels, but found them to be cost prohibitive at this time. We hope to install solar panels on our roof within the next ten years.
- What steps were taken to achieve the goal?  
We held a LEED Charette to clarify for the architects and development team the importance of green design.
- What were the obstacles to completion of the projects?  
Gap financing for the project was difficult to secure. Organizational capacity had to be increased dramatically. A lawsuit by a neighbor to overturn our Planning Board approvals cost time, money, and public support.
- What support did the project receive?  
\$560,000 in personal, unsecured loans from community members. Guidance and project management assistance from Mayor Masiello, Erie County Planning Commissioner Larry Rubin, and Common Council Representative Marc Coppola. Gap Financing from BERC & Erie County RDC to match the amount raised by the community.
- What was the projected pay-back period for the project?  
10 years on equipment & working capital. 25 years on building mortgage.
- Is the pay-back on target?  
Yes.

- What are the results of the project? (such as: reduction in energy use, reduction of emissions, reduction in utility cost, etc.)
  - In moving into an energy efficient building, we decreased our electrical usage per square foot by one third, from 6.2 kwh per square foot to 4.1 kwh per square foot.
  - We installed an expensive, high efficiency refrigeration system which will reduce our energy usage significantly. This system includes a rack system rather than individual compressors, high efficiency display units, and a heat reclaim coil that will use the heat from the rack to heat the tap water throughout the building.
  - By providing a larger market for locally grown foods, we are helping to reduce the usage of fossil fuels that transport food to the people of WNY.
  - We have significantly increased the number of organic products we carry, which are much less resource intensive at the source than their conventional counterparts.
  - We included 12 windows in the main atrium space above the sales floor, allowing for a significant reduction in the number of overhead lights necessary to light the sales floor.
  - We included 5 inch thick (as opposed to the required 3 ½ inches) insulation throughout the building to ensure energy efficiency.
  - In order to encourage walk-in and bike-in business we:
    - Installed ten bike racks
    - Located the store centrally within the neighborhood of our core customers
    - Included 6 fewer parking spaces than required by the city.
    - Located the store in on a site that is easily accessible by public transportation.
  - We installed Shaw Contract Groups highest recycled content carpeting with 25% recycled content and EcoWorx Sustainable Backing System which is non-PVC and contains 40% recycled content.
  - We recycled or salvaged 96% of total construction/demolition waste. On an ongoing basis, we donate or compost all produce waste produced by operations.
  - We used locally fabricated masonry & steel in the construction of our building.
- What would you do differently on the next energy project?
  - Solar panels
  - Dimming ballasts on all overhead lights
  - Rooftop landscaping to reduce heat islands
  - Permeable pavers in the parking lot

- Rainwater collection units
  - Operable windows throughout
- What do you or your organization consider the most positive secondary outcome from the project?
  - Providing a larger market for local and organic farmers.
  - Providing natural foods and groceries within walking distance.
- Are you currently purchasing any “green” energy?  
 No. In our old store, we were purchasing “green” energy from the Energy Cooperative of NY and are planning to switch to green energy by the end of the year.
- How will you or your organization be willing to mentor others in starting an energy conservation project?  
 We would be happy to discuss what we did with any other groups considering green design and energy conservation.
- May we post/publish your project on our web site?  
 SURE!